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ABSTRACT

A 12-month program provides adult Indochinese refugees with the basic communication skills and understanding of American culture needed to help them secure or upgrade employment. Offered through the community college system, the program is divided into four levels of instruction: non-literate, beginning, intermediate, and upper intermediate. The curriculum at each level consists of reading, grammar, tests, and an outside speaker program. Staff development includes preservice workshops and teacher observations. Special attention is also given to preparing staff for cultural differences in dealing with the Indochinese population. A list of special considerations describes the problems of pronunciation and the special needs of a non-literate student body. Appendices contain a course description, samples of tests, a discussion of cultural differences, songs for use in an English as a second language class, and an evaluation instrument. (LP)

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# "THE ESL REFUGEE PROGRAM: A NUTS AND BOLTS PRESENTATION"

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The Houston Community College System Adult and Continuing Education Division has served the Indochinese community of Houston since 1976. In the last six years the college has offered English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) classes, Vocational Skills Training, and vocational counseling and support services to over 14,000 Indochinese refugees. The college is located in a city where the Indochinese refugee community is estimated at as high a level as 35,000. The success of the vocational component of the program is evident from the FY 79-80 99+% placement rate of its vocational graduates at an average cost of $282.95 per student. This paper will address the ESL component of the Houston Community College System's Refugee Program.

BACKGROUND

The Refugee Program offers 36 ESL classes and is decentralized at seven sites in the city. Fifteen classes are offered during the day and twenty-one at night. Class size is limited to 25 students (15 for classes with non-literates). While class size is large, because of limited funds, we have felt a need to have this large number of students per class. The documented waiting list as of November 6 was 558 and will continue to grow due to a new policy of admitting all adult refugees into the program rather than just Indochinese. Also, because of funding limitations, the program will cutback from thirty-six classes to twenty classes in January.

The ESL Program is divided into four levels. A preliminary level has been established for non-literate students. It is our experience that non-literate students can not be mixed successfully in classes with literate students. The remaining twenty-seven classes are divided into beginning, intermediate and upper intermediate levels. Classes meet for three hours a day, four days a week, for a total of twelve hours per week. The upper intermediate classes only meet twice a week for six hours total so that more students can be served.

A student can complete the program in twelve months, during which time the student will have completed three semesters. However, as we all know, language learning can not always be assimilated at the same rate by all students and therefore, some students will repeat a semester.

The purpose of this ESL Program is to offer the students basic communication tools and an understanding of the culture in which English is used so that they may find employment or upgrade their employment if they currently hold a job. Any student who completes the program knows that they possess the language skills to become productive, contributing members of American society. Upon graduation, they will have the know-how to participate in many facets of American life and will be able to pursue the American dream as have immigrant populations before them.

THE CURRICULUM

At the beginning of each semester, instructors are given a curriculum covering the materials to be used. The curriculum divides the semester into weeks, indicating which books and which chapters should be used (see attachment). Also, the curriculum indicates when the departmental tests will be administered. Along with the curriculum, instructors are given the grammar points and situations that students are expected to be able to function with by the end of the semester. Upper intermediate level instructors are also given a list of outside community speakers who go to their class on a monthly basis. These speakers have come from the Labor Department, the Health Department, Planned Parenthood, and the Texas Department of Public Safety. Outside speakers are utilized both to give students language practice with an increased number of Americans as well as to gain information regarding community resources.

The curriculum is not intended to constrain the instructors. As long as

their students can perform the expected student outcomes at the semester's end, the teachers are free to develop any alternate curriculum to meet their unique teaching style.

TESTS

Entry level tests are administered to all students (see attachments). This is designed as a three minute oral proficiency test. If a student's English is beyond the upper-intermediate level, he or she is not admitted into the program but rather is referred to other programs in the college, such as GED or academic English.

Three times during the semester departmental tests are administered. These tests are divided into three sections, a cloze passage, a dictation, and survival skills oriented questions which are asked orally by the teacher and then answered by the students in writing. It should be noted that all tests ask the following two questions:

1. What do you say when you don't understand someone?
2. What do you say when someone speaks too fast?

Asking for clarification is an immediate need of the utmost importance in language learning.

The exams do not test for oral proficiency because by the end of the semester the instructors, through daily contact, have a good general idea of each student's speaking abilities. The tests are designed to take one hour to administer.

MATERIALS

The following materials are used by the Refugee Program:

Primary Text: English-as-a-Second Language
A New Approach for the 21st Century, Modulearn, Inc.

Secondary Texts: Library of Adult Basic Education LAPS, P.A.R., Inc.
Conversation In English, American Book Company
A Conversation Book, Prentice-Hall
Jazz Chants, Oxford

The primary text is the same material used by the State Department funded ESL classes in Southeast Asian refugee camps. In addition to the above mentioned supplementary texts, the program also uses visuals which depict, among other contexts, road signs, menus, parts of cars, etc. Also, realia such as income tax forms, road maps and city bus schedules are used in the classrooms. The use of songs is emphasized in our instruction.

Instructors are encouraged to give their input and suggestions when new materials are selected. While the structure the book affords is helpful in classroom management, equally important to the program is the time spent in class with books closed. This forces the students to engage in free communication and demonstrate to themselves their abilities to use the language globally. Books and materials are regarded in the program only as a stepping stone to free conversation, which is often difficult for Indochinese students who are used to language learning in terms of a more traditional grammar-translation approach.

## STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Of utmost importance to the quality of the program is staff development. The program is totally staffed by part-time instructors. In the Refugee Program, while many of the instructors have prior ESL experience or at least prior teaching experience, many of the instructors do not. Many teachers are hired whose main qualification is great potential, and more often than not, they prove them-

selves to be good teachers.

All instructors who are hired are given a four hour pre-service. One hour is spent on general program procedures, cultural hints about the Indochinese, a discussion of the materials used, and program philosophy. They are given this same information in the form of a teacher's handbook (see attachment). The other three hours are spent observing instructors so that new instructors will have a better idea of what is expected of them. Two specific staff development areas have been implimented which greatly enhance the quality of instruction and staff morale. First, one-hour inservices are held each month. Inservice topics have included: the role of voluntary agencies in refugee resettlement, using the newspaper in the ESL classroom, teaching pronunciation to Vietnamese students, and a presentation by the Center for Applied Linguistics on their Cultural Orientation Program in the refugee camps. As often as possible, instructors are asked to give the inservice. These inservices bring together our instructors from all over the city and help give the staff a sense of common purpose and unity. It increases their belief in high professional standards for themselves.

The second instructional development area is teacher observation. This is something we take very seriously. All instructors are observed at least once each semester. The instructors are observed the first hour and a half during class. Then for thirty minutes the observer and the instructor discuss what the teacher is doing that is good and effective, and what he or she is doing that could be better. During the last hour of class, the observer then teaches the class to give the instructor additional ideas for classroom methods. New instructors are observed by the administrative staff. Our experienced instructors observe each other, thus helping to foster a group spirit among the instructors in teaching English to the refugees.

CONSIDERATIONS (Problems)

1. The main problem in the Refugee Program, where the majority of the students are Vietnamese, is coming up with new and better methods for teaching pronounciation. The National Indochinese Clearinghouse of the Center for Applied Linguistics states, "The sound systems of Vietnamese and English have very little in common, as a consequence, the Vietnamese learner of English will have a terrible time with pronounciation." Our experience has shown this to be true and if there is a fool proof method for teaching pronounciation, we have yet to develop it.

2. A second consideration is our testing procedure. While we find that our tests are more than adequate, our semester exams do not test oral proficiency. We have been unable to develop a short, valid test of oral proficiency that can be administered and graded within a reasonable amount of time.

3. Another consideration we face is developing an appropriate curriculum for our non-literate students. For those of you who have not worked with non-literate Asians, these are people with little or no prior experience with plumbing, electricity, modern transportation - some of them had elephants back home. Many of these adults have never set foot in a classroom and don't know how to hold a pencil. Traditional ESL methods and materials are not always appropriate for them. We have benefited greatly from the curriculum designed by the Women's Program of the Indochinese Cultural and Service Center of Portland and would appreciate seeing any curricula that other institutions have developed for non-literates.

CONCLUSION

The Refugee Program of the Houston Community College System is a very successful one. I'm allowed to brag about the program, because the first ingredient to a good program is the students, second is the instructors, and trailing third is administration. The Indochinese are a joy to work with. They are hard working, serious students who, regardless of their particular background, place high value on education. Their positive attitude and enthusiasm for learning helps foster among our instructors a desire to provide quality teaching in the classroom. And it is this same enthusiasm of our Indochinese students that has made us in administration work to provide the best possible program for these people who are here to start a new and better life.

APPENDICES

Houston Community College System

22 Waugh Drive, Houston, Texas 77007
Phone (713) 869-5021

LEVEL II CURRICULUM

MATERIALS: MODULEARN: English as a Second Language, A New Approach for the 21st Century LESSONS 21-40

LABEL: Library of Adult Basic Education LAPS

Sept. 8 WEEK 1

MODULEARN - Unit 21
LABEL - Electrical Appliances

Sept. 14 WEEK 2

MODULEARN - Units 22, 23
LABEL - Go by Bus, pp. 2-3

Sept. 21 WEEK 3

MODULEARN - Units 24, 25
LABEL - The Post Office, p.8

Sept. 28 WEEK 4

MODULEARN - Units 26, 27
LABEL - The Dentist

Oct. 5 WEEK 5

MODULEARN - Units 28, 29
LABEL - The Hospital

Oct. 12 WEEK 6

MODULEARN - Units 30, 31
LABEL - The Weather

DEPARTMENT TEST I

Oct. 19 WEEK 7

MODULEARN - Units 32, 33
LABEL - Tools
- Housing, pp. 7-10

Oct. 26 WEEK 8

MODULEARN - Units 34, 35
LABEL - Kitchen Know-How

Nov. 2 WEEK 9

MODULEARN - Units 36,37
LABEL -

Nov. 9 WEEK 10

MODULEARN - Units 38, 39
LABEL - Your fire department

Nov. 16 WEEK 11

MODULEARN - Unit 40/Review
LABEL - Highway and Road Sign

DEPARTMENTAL TEST II

NOV. 23 Teacher and supplementary materials
Nov. 30 Teacher made and supplementary materials
Dec. 7 Review and final exam
Dec. 10 DEPARTMENTAL GRADUATION CEREMONY

# GRAMMAR POINTS TO BE COVERED IN LEVEL TWO

I. PRESENT TENSE (REVIEW)

II. PAST TENSE: REGULAR and IRREGULAR FORMS

- Affirmative/Negative Statements
- Questions
- Information Questions
- Contracted Forms

III. FUTURE TENSE

- Going to: Affirmative/Negative Statements
  Questions
- Will: Affirmative/Negative Statements
  Questions

IV. VERBS PLUS INFINITIVES

V. MODALS

- Can/Can't
- May

VI. INDIRECT OBJECTS

VII. PRONOUNS

Objective:
me, you, him, her, it, us, them

Indefinite:
everyone, someone

VIII. ADVERBS

ly,
then, never, sometimes, ago, too, also

IX. DETERMINERS

some, more, many

X. CONJUNCTIONS

because, but

XI. PREPOSITIONS

into, to, from, of, through, with

XII. EXPRESSIONS AS:

What's the matter?
What happened?

80 total points
1.3% each point

HCCS-10

LEVEL II
Test #1 October 15, 1981
Units 21 thru 32

I. Cloze Passage (1 point each blank)

Write the passage on the board. Have the students copy the passage and fill in the blanks with appropriate words.

Bill: What did you do_____weekend?

Sue: Last weekend I went _____the movies.

Bill: Was the _____good or bad?

Sue: It _____okay. The name of _____movie was Star Wars.

Bill: _____friend, Steve, and I_____to the baseball game _____Saturday.

We ate dinner_____the Sun Delux Cafe_____Chinatown.

Mary: What did you eat_____dinner?

Bill: I had a _____dinner. I am on_____diet.

Mary: Does Bill live _____Houston?

Bill: No, he is _____painter in Dallas. He_____ this morning at 9:30 on flight #43.

Mary: Oh, can_____paint a picture of _____father.

Bill: (laughing) No, he paints houses!

II. Dictation (1 point each word)

Read the entire paragraph before the students begin to write. Then read the sentences again- one at a time - and repeat each one only once - slowly in parts. After the entire paragraph has been dictated, re-read it one more time slowly.

Bill is an auto mechanic. He works in a garage everyday. He can repair cars, trucks and vans. Last week was his birthday. His brother gave him a sweater, but it was too small. Bill exchanged it at the department store.

III. Have the students answer the following questions in complete sentences. (3 points each sentence). Read the questions orally.

1. What do you say when you do not understand someone?
2. What do you say when someone talks too fast?
3. Where do you get a money order?
4. Your tooth hurts. Where do you go?
5. I am homesick. What do I want?
6. I take Bus 84 to Shepherd. Then I take Bus 60 to Main street. What do I need to get on Bus 60?
7. Where did you work in your country.

LEVEL II

99 Total Points
1% for each point

Test #2, November 19, 1981
Units 33 thru 40

I. Cloze Passage (1 point each blank)

Write the passage on the board. Have the students copy the passage and fill in the blanks with appropriate words.

Operator: Hello. May I help you?

Maria: Yes. Please give me_____ number of Kary's Garage.

Operator: _____that name, please.

Maria: K- ___R-Y-S

Operator: Thank_____. It's 648-1069.

Maria: Thank you. * * * * *

Mr. Kary: _____Garage. Can I help_____?

Maria: Yes, I think my_____is dead. Can you _____it?

Mr. Kary: Sure.

Maria: How much _____it cost?

Mr. Kary: We will_____your battery for $4.00. Towing ____be $20.00.

Maria: That's a _____buy! Can I buy_____on credit.

Mr. Kary: Sure.

Maria: Thank_____. I'm going to come right over.

II. Dictation (1 point each word)

Read the entire paragraph before the students begin to write. Then read the sentences again - one at a time - and repeat each one only once - slowly in parts. After the entire paragraph has been dictated, re-read it one more time slowly.

Tom is going to get up very early Saturday morning to go to Sears for their weekend sale. There will be some good buys on T.V.'s. A thief broke into Tom's apartment last Wednesday. Tom called the police right away, but the thief ran away very quickly. The manager of the apartments is going to put new locks on all the doors.

III. Have the students answer the following questions in complete sentences. (3 points each sentence) Read each question orally.

1. What do you say when you don't understand someone?
2. What do you say when someone speaks to fast?
3. What utilities do you pay?
4. Your house is on fire. Who do you call?
5. The traffic light is red. What do you do?
6. I want to put a nail in the wall. What tool do I use?
7. You move to a new address. What do you fill out at the post office?

LEVEL II

103 Total points
1% for each point

FINAL EXAM
December 8 & 9, 1981

I. Cloze Passage (1 point each blank)

Write the passage on the board. Have the students copy the passage and fill in the blanks with appropriate words.

Thanh: What's the matter, Officer?

Policeman: You were going 50_____ in a 35 MPH_____.

Thanh: I'm in a hurry. _____need to put my _____tax form in the ____ and then get to _____interview for a job.

Policeman: _____I see your license, _____.

Thanh: I'm sorry, someone stole_____wallet two weeks ago. _____license was in the _____.

Ploiceman: That's no excuse. You_____to get a temporary_____at the D.P.S. office, to fill out a form_____get your duplicate license.

Thanh: _____didn't know that.

Policeman: All _____ of the United states need to know the laws.

II. Dictation (1 point for each word)

Read the entire paragraph before the students begin to write. Then read the sentences again- one at a time - and repeat each one only once - slowly in parts. After the entire paragraph has been dictated, re-read it one more time slowly.

Mr. and Mrs. Lee are going to move into a new apartment next weekend. It is unfurnished. Mr. Lee is looking for a full-time job, so Mrs. Lee is going to look for sales on furniture. She will also call the gas and electric companies. She will ask them to turn on the utilities. She will fill out a change of address card, too.

III. Have the students answer the following questions in complete sentences. (3 points each sentence) Read each question orally.

1. What do you say when you don't understand someone?
2. What do you say when someone talks to fast?
3. Someone broke your window today. When are you going to fix the window?
4. What time do you get up every day?
5. John wasn't in school today. Why was he absent?
6. What are you going to do tomorrow?
7. Can you park in front of a sign that says "Bus Stop"?

# CLASSROOM CONSIDERATIONS FOR INDOCHINESE STUDENTS

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1. Learning Styles in Indochina

The traditional Confucianist and Buddhist temple-based learning system was practically abandoned when the French conquered Indochina at the end of the 19th century. The Christian missionaries gave Vietnam the Romanized writing system, and the colonists imposed their French-based educational system on Indochina, from kindergarten to university. The University of Hanoi was founded in 1908, where the elite of Indochina was trained by the French. In the last 20 years of a free Indochina, American influence was considerably exerted on the local education. Some colleges in Vietnam even adopted the American concept of credit-hour, the American testing method, and the American grading system. Despite all the above, the Confucianist spirit was ubiquitous. Teachers were revered by students and parents alike. As a result, most teachers were authoritarian and kept a distance from their students. Students had to rise when a teacher entered the classroom and were taught to listen attentively to their teachers. Whatever the teacher said had to be correct, and it was unthinkable for a student to disagree with his teacher. School facilities were very modest; school libraries were virtually non-existent, except for large urban secondary schools and colleges. The Indochinese method of learning was bookish. Students took notes, memorized them, and, in lower grades, recited them verbatim in class. Students rarely volunteered answers to questions asked by teachers, partly because of their fear of "losing face" if

giving the wrong answer and partly because they did not want to be "showing off." Parents hardly had any opportunity to meet with their children's teachers, and PTA's were very few, if any.

2. Handling the Indochinese Students

2.1 Language of Instruction

Because Indochinese students are only beginning to learn English as a second language, you, the American teacher, would do well by enunciating clearly and slowly when talking to them. Refrain from using colloquial and slang terms (e.g, "What's cooking?" or "I am just pulling your legs"). You should also use simple vocabulary and short simple sentences. Say, for example, "Do this exercise," instead of " Complete the assignment at the end of the chapter if you feel like it." Remember that for the Indochinese it is the given name that counts in all situations. A Vietnamese or Cambodian full name is written this way:

FAMILY NAME ----- MIDDLE NAME (IF ANY) ----- GIVEN NAME

You can call school children by their given name alone, but you should call adult Indochinese by their given name preceded by Miss, Mr., Mrs., or titles such as Dr., Rev., Captain. Note that the Laotians have no middle names, and their names are written the American way:

GIVEN NAME ----- FAMILY NAME

Be careful with hand signals when you have to use them to communicate with Indochinese students. The following signals must be avoided, at least at the beginning:

| Signals | American message | Indochinese message |
|---|---|---|
| | Come here (acceptable) | Come here, brat (or dog, cat, etc.)! (insulting) |
| | Perfect! (congratulatory) | Worthless! (insulting) |

Be wary of the Indochinese "yes" for an answer to a negative or a tag question. The Indochinese "yes" at the beginning of an answer is just a polite term that means, "Yes, I am listening to you." (It is culturally very hard for them to say "no.") So, concentrate on the rest of the answer, if any, for the right message. Answers like the following will be common from the Indochinese:

| Questions | Indochinese Answers |
|---|---|
| Don't you speak English? | Yes, I don't speak English. |
| You speak English, don't you? | Yes, I don't speak English. |
| You don't speak English, do you? | Yes, I don't speak English. |

You are advised to wait until your students are advanced enough to teach them how to properly answer questions in English.

2.2 Shyness

Traditionally Indochinese students, regardless of age, hold their teacher in awe and feel uneasy in his presence. Being shy or reserved is a polite attitude to show their respect to the teacher. Thus, a sincere and friendly (but not overwhelmingly so) attitude

from the American teacher will certainly make them respond favorably. It is also a good idea to assign a couple of friendly classmates (of the same sex) to help an Indochinese student adjust to the new school environment. This "buddy system" will work wonders.

2.3 Working Habits

As mentioned earlier, rote learning and verbatim reciting characterizes the learning and teaching mode in Indochina. This may make the students irresponsible and minimize their creativity. Besides, they have been brought up not to disagree with their teachers, who were usually stiff and aloof and who discouraged class discussions. They are also unfamiliar with library facilities and with looking for information by themselves. By the same token, they are not used to long and extensive readings. The American teacher is accordingly advised to initiate them gradually to extensive readings, to getting information from library sources, and to participating in class discussion. However, do not ask them to speak too soon to the class, as this may embarrass them and inhibit their oral development. The Indochinese use the French way of writing signs and symbols in the numerical system and in arithmetic:

| Indochinese | American |
|---|---|
| 1 | 1 |
| 7 | 7 |
| 0,500 | .500 or 0.500 |
| 3.000 | 3,000 |

Division is done differently in Indochina; for instance, 75 divided by 5:

$$\begin{array}{r|l} 75 & 5 \\ \hline 25 & 15 \\ 0 & \end{array}$$

Indochina also goes metric and uses the centigrade system for measuring temperature. As a result, Indochinese students will need to know how many liters is a gallon, how many grams is a pound, how many degrees centigrade is equivalent to a temperature of 75 degrees Fahrenheit, etc.

2.4 Coeducation, Physical Education, Sex Education

Though classes having both boys and girls exist in Indochina, sexes are always separated in the Indochinese society. In a mixed class in Indochina, for example, the boys will invariably take up the back rows - never being allowed to share the same bench with the girls. So, do not assign the Indochinese students to work with members of the opposite sex, at least in the first few months of school.

As far as physical education is concerned, American teachers should not be surprised if Indochinese students worry to death about some of the American locker-room practices. Groups of naked boys or girls showering together is shocking and unheard of in Indochina. It may take quite some time for them to accept this perfectly "normal" American practice.

Because sex education is taboo in Indochina but an important subject in American schools today, Indochinese students will have to be introduced to this embarrassing matter in a most delicate manner.

NAME_____ LOCATION_____ HCCS-19

LEVEL _____ TIME_____ DATE_____ # OF STUDENTS_____

## INDOCHINESE ESL CLASSROOM EVALUATION

_____ Everything is to be eminating from the teacher, but the students are to be doing most of the talking.

### ATMOSPHERE IN THE CLASSROOM

_____ There is a trusting atmosphere which allows students to make mistakes.

_____ There is a sense of humor, a sense of fun.

_____ The energy level is high.

_____ Students are kept on the edge of their seats.

### NAMES

_____ Instructor uses students' names.

_____ Students know instructor's name.

_____ Students use other students' names.

### MOVEMENT

_____ There is movement of the students.

_____ Teacher moves around the classroom.

### EXERCISES

_____ Objectives are apparent.

_____ Material is relevant to objectives.

_____ Presentations establish a meaning.

_____ Students understand what is expected of them.

_____ Pronunciation is woven into all exercises

_____ Material is effectively practiced.

_____ Students can ask each other questions.

_____ The books are used as stepping stones to free creative conversati

_____ Experiences and examples used relate to the students' lives.

_____ The explanations are relevant and understandable.

_____ Appropriate reinforcement is used.

_____ Teacher makes use of errors in a positive way.

_____ Teacher is attentive while students are reciting, group or indiv

_____ All students are called on at least once...maximum student partic tion.

_____ Use of a variety of materials.

Teacher Strengths:

Patience
Versatility
Optimism
Understanding
Cultural Awareness
Sensitivity
Genuine liking for different people
Sense of humor

# SONG, NURSERY RHYMES, AND TONGUE TWISTERS FOR ESL STUDENT

1. Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall, Humpty Dumpty had a great fall, All the King's horses and all the King's men, couldn't put Humpty together again.

2. She sells sea shells down by the sea shore. (repeat faster)

3. How much wood could a wood chuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood? (repeat faster)

4. One, two Buckle my shoe; Three four, Knock at the door; Five six, Pick up sticks; Seven eight, Shut the gate; Nine, ten, A big fat hen.

5. Twinkle, twinkle, little star, How I wonder what you are! Up above the world so high, Like a diamond in the sky.

6. Jack and Jill went up the hill to fetch a pail of water, Jack fell down and broke his crown and Jill came tumbling after.

7. Hickory, dickory, dock, The mouse ran up the clock. The clock struck one, The mouse ran down, Hickory, dickory, dock.

8. The eyes of Texas are upon you All the livelong day. The eyes of Texas are upon you. You cannot get away. Do not think you can escape them From night till early in the morn - The eyes of Texas are upon you Till Gabriel blows his horn.

9. Happy Birthday to you, Happy Birthday to you, Happy Birthday dear_____, Happy Birthday to you...

10. She'll be comin' 'round the mountain when she comes, She'll be comin' 'round the mountain when she comes, She'll be comin' 'round the mountain, She'll be comin' 'round the mountain, She'll be comin' 'round the mountain when she comes. She'll be driving six white horses when she comes, etc.

11. We shall overcome, We shall overcome, We shall overcome some day.... Oh, deep in my heart I do believe, We shall overcome some day.....

12. Oh! Give me a home where the buffalo roam, Where the deer and the antelope play; Where seldom is heard a discouraging word, And the sky is not clouded all day. Home, home on the range! Where the deer and the antelope play Where seldom is heard a discouraging word, And the sky is not clouded all day.

13. Dashing through the snow In a one-horse open sleigh, O'ver the fields we go, Laughing all the way; Bells on bob-tail ring, Making spirits bright; What fun is to ride and sing A sleighing song tonight! Jingle bells! Jingle bells! Jingle all the way! Oh what fun it is to ride In a one-horse open sleigh (repeat)

In teaching ESL to Vietnamese students, the teacher needs to pay particular attention to pronunciation. Many Vietnamese are learning the grammar and vocabulary of English without attaining functional proficiency in pronunciation. The point in teaching ESL to refugees is to give them the basic language skills so that they can get a job and make the beginning steps towards integrating themselves into American society. If the refugees cannot make themselves understood because of poor pronunciation, the teacher has not passed the proper tools on to the student.

The teacher must first consider that in Vietnam and in many of the refugee camps, English instruction deals primarily with grammar translation. Classes were large and the students were not sufficiently encouraged to practice orally. Their teachers were generally Vietnamese which prevented the students from having a proper model for pronunication. Also, because of the traditional student-teacher role in Vietnam where the teacher keeps a great deal of distance from the students, the students were not encouraged to have personal oral interaction with the teacher.

Vietnamese students are therefore more comfortable reading and writing English than in speaking it. Additionally, the Vietnamese are ill at ease when they must produce original, creative sentences. They did not do this sort of activity in their native country when studying English.

The primary phonological problem for Vietnamese is pronouncing consonants at the end of words. It is this specific problem that often prevents native speakers of English from understanding them. The Vietnamese will often simply not pronounce final consonants at all. The Vietnamese language only has the consonant sounds /k/,/m/,/n/,/p/, and /t/ in the final position of words. This contrasts with the numerous consonants English uses in the final position.

Because they have such a difficult time with English phonology, every ESL class for Vietnamese should be a pronunciation class. Pronunciation drill and suggestions should be woven into all lessons-whether grammar, reading, conversation or writing is the ostensible lesson.

Below are some suggestions on how to teach pronunciation.

I. The teacher must first explain to the students the importance of good pronunciation. Many students do not recognize the importance of pronouncing final consonants in English; rather, they believe that by learning the grammar and vocabulary alone, they will be understood. This, obviously, is not the case. Secondly, the teacher must be sure the students are hearing the sounds the teacher is producing. And finally, the teacher must provide the students with feedback so that they know whether they are pronouncing correctly or not.

II. Overenunciation of final consonant sounds to the point of absurdity can often help the students. By making yourself, the teacher, appear a little silly, the student will feel less foolish in attempting American-like pronunciation. This method helps ease tension in adult learners and reduces student inhibition which is fairly high in Vietnamese groups. By overenunciating in class, the student also has an extra reminder outside of class of the importance in pronouncing these final consonants.

III. Minimal pair drills (sit, sip, hit, hick) are another useful tool. The National Indochinese Clearinghouse has a book of minimal pair drills specifically for Vietnamese which is available in the Indochinese Program office. These drills are also useful in helping students to distinguish between two different sounds.

IV. Oral reading is another opportunity to practice pronunication. Have the students circle all the final consonants in a paragraph and then have selected students read part of the paragraph. The extra visual reminder will prove effective for some students. Students should be given constant feedback to know which consonants they are and are not pronouncing correctly.

V. Nursery rhymes and tongue twisters (How much wood could a woodchuck chuck..., She sells sea shells...) also help the students with pronunciation. Every week or two a new rhyme can be introduced to the class. Have the students memorize them and then make sure, class size permitting, each student has the opportunity to recite the rhyme in front of the class. Artificial exercises such as these are excellent opportunities to demand near-perfect pronunciation from the students.

VI. When a student fails to pronounce a final consonant, thank him or her for making a mistake that will help the class learn, and then write it on the blackboard. Should a student say, "I live in a how," and leave off the final /s/ for "house", write "how" on the board and ask the student if this is what s/he meant to say. Always select four or five students to give you the correct answer, including the student who made the original mistake, after you have modeled the correct pronunciation.

VII. Conversation is the most important activity in the ESL classroom. The class size in the Indochinese Program is very large and the Vietnamese are apt to give one word replies when the teacher initiates conversation. However, the teacher must be persistant and let the students know that they are expected to participate and that they need this practice as much as they need book learning. Students who whisper must be cajoled and encouraged to speak louder. All students must be included in the conversation. <u>This is the teacher's responsibility</u>. A limited amount of phonological monitoring should be done by the teachers during classroom discussions.

Enough feedback should be given to the students so that they are made aware of their mistakes, but too much correction will inhibit the conversational flow.

Teaching correct pronunciation is a slow process. It requires constant work on the part of the teacher and the student. The National Indochinese Clearinghouse of the Center for Applied Linguistics goes so far as to state, "The sound systems of Vietnamese and English have very little in common; as a consequence, the Vietnamese learner of English will have a terrible time with pronunciation." While this statement is certainly true, it is equally true that under the guidance of good teachers, Vietnamese will learn good, functional American pronunciation.